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NOTES ON OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

It has been said that those who make history rarely write it, and those who write it rarely understand it. To this it must be added that those who write about it not unfrequently fail to take into account the circumstances in which the history was made and the conditions under which it was put into writing. The history of the children of Israel is one of unique complexity chiefly because it is a religious history. As it has come down to us, it is so beset by internal difficulties that scholars have found themselves obliged to subject the evidence to a searching criticism which has been largely destructive. But if the result has been that it is now possible to trace the steady growth of Israel's religion and institutions, can it be denied that the reconstruction of her history, which is now generally adopted by critics, is no less full of problems? Yet, one believes that the work of literary criticism has not been in vain. Its results have been built up slowly and gradually, and the fact that there is practical unanimity among the critics themselves is (though it may savour of flippancy) a significant indication that they may be generally accepted. The "foundation" has been laid, and all are agreed upon the "structure," but there are many details of "architecture" and "decoration" wherein the builders and workmen are not yet in harmony. A glance at any of the recent histories of Israel proves this in a moment. It is notably the earlier traditions, the origins of Israel, which are especially obscure, and although some may fear that the evidence is too isolated and scanty to permit of any attempt to trace the first steps, this is no reason why the endeavour should not be honestly made.

It is this pre-monarchic period which I propose to consider, to notice certain narratives and certain historical difficulties which appear to invite attention. The studies which follow are all more or less independent of each other, although all bear directly upon the origins of Israel. I have throughout endeavoured to avoid fettering myself with preconceived theories or fancies, and have regarded the opening sentences of this paper not so much as a canon for the "higher critic," but as a warning when one passes judgment upon the historical questions one attempts to investigate.

Five years ago I published a series of conjectures on the literary analysis of 2 Samuel, in the course of which I ventured to propose a fundamental reconstruction of the narratives it contained. I had at the same time practically completed other notes upon the earlier narratives, but these seemed to lead to such far-reaching conclusions that I was unwilling to "rush into print" until I had seen the result of the earlier article. In the meantime I have not unnaturally found myself anticipated in several particulars, although in several cases I find that I have arrived at the same results as others on entirely different grounds. But the chief cause of delay has been naturally the publication of Professor Karl Budde's *Bücher Samuel* in Marti's *Kurzer Hand-Commentar* (1902) where this scholar did me the honour of subjecting my article to a close but invariably courteous criticism, which rendered a reconsideration of all my theories an indispensable preliminary to the publication of the later notes. I must confess at the outset that I have found no reason for departing from my main conclusions, although Budde's careful and sometimes severe criticisms have indicated weak spots in my arguments¹, which I gratefully acknowledge. I shall proceed, therefore, in the first section to recapitulate as briefly as possible the chief results contained in the article of 1900, with a few remarks upon the earlier chapters of David's life in 1 Samuel, and shall then endeavour to notice the objections that have been raised to my theory.

I. THE LIFE OF DAVID².

The series of chapters known as the "court history of David" (2 Samuel ix-xx, continued in 1 Kings i, ii) has invariably been regarded as one of the best specimens of early Hebrew literature: continuous, the work of one almost contemporary writer, and, with rare exceptions, entirely free from interpolations and signs of redaction. It was precisely this section which I found occasion to attack; the chief problem being whether it was (as it purported to be) an account of the history of David's last years, or whether it did not

¹ Notably in my attempt to find support in the linguistic data, in my discussion of ch. vi, and in several small points of detail. On the other hand, Budde himself has perhaps gone too far in endeavouring to minimize the indications of unevenness which were noticed, and has not shown that boldness which marked his invaluable critical labours upon Judges and 1 Samuel.

² See more fully "Notes on the Composition of 2 Samuel," *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, vol. XVI (1900), pp. 145-77, here referred to by the page alone.

consist of a number of old narratives, originally distinct, belonging to various parts of the king's reign. It was primarily on historical and not on literary grounds that reconstruction was proposed. Any one who has read (let us say) the legends of King Arthur is aware that an impression of literary unity alone is no sound argument in favour of the genuineness of a piece of writing, and there appeared to be no *a priori* grounds for the conviction that the general view of the literary unity of the court history was unassailable. From a consideration of many internal difficulties, therefore, it was suggested that even as the chronicler wrongly supposed that David became king of all Israel immediately after the death of Saul (1 Chron. xi), so it was the incorrect view of some redactor of 2 Samuel that this event occurred as the necessary sequel to the death of Saul's son Ishbaal. We can correct the chronicler by the Books of Samuel; we can only conjecture that the latter give expression to an inaccurate view from a study of the internal evidence. One knows how later tradition idealized David and magnified his achievements; could one feel confident that the first step had not already been taken in 2 Samuel? One realized that the man who was the first king over all Israel, the first to unite the north and south, must have been a favourite figure in popular tradition. One has only to observe how the Bedouin of Syria and Palestine treasure the stories of old-time heroes in order to appreciate what David's personality must have meant to the sons of Israel; and when one perceives how the most impossible of all supernatural deeds are voted genuine by the existence of this or that place, one will scarcely assume too readily that the vivid local colouring of any particular story is *prima facie* evidence of its authenticity.

From a consideration of the evidence it was suggested that the revolt of Absalom must have preceded the great wars. The narrative (2 Sam. xv-xx) scarcely seemed to represent David as king over all Israel, and it appeared more probable that it was simply a rising in which the southern clans of Judah took part. Absalom had been at Geshur, a south Palestinian district¹, whose king was his maternal grandfather, the two leading men were Judaeans, and the rebels met at Hebron (p. 159 sq.). Tradition had associated with it the northern tribes, partly because at some period they had no doubt tried to withstand David's yoke, and partly, also, to give effect to that feeling of national unity which (to take an example) transformed the exploits of local "judges" into matters of national moment. In consequence of this theory, chs. v-viii, xxi-xxiv were regarded

¹ Not the Aramaean state (pp. 153, 160), "in Aram," xv. 8, being treated as a gloss.

as originally forming a distinct source, and the remaining chapters were arranged provisionally: ii-iv (Ishbaal); ix (Meribbaal); xiii-xx (Absalom's revolt); x-xii (Ammonite war). Incidentally, this seemed to lead to two interesting corollaries. In the first place, when David fled to Mahanaim we are told that "Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon" was among those who brought David furniture and provisions (xvii. 27). The incident is the more valuable since Ammon and Saul's kingdom could not have been on friendly terms after 1 Sam. xi. But the passage is difficult in the original Hebrew, and, as Prof. H. P. Smith (*International Critical Commentary*) remarks on the words "and Shobi": "It is possible that a verb once stood here." "Shobi" is a curious name, for which no plausible explanation has been proposed, and one is tempted to read וּבֵא ("and . . . brought") for וַשְׁבִי, and assume that "son of" was inserted to make sense after the verb had become illegible or corrupt (p. 164 sq.). Now, if it was really Nahash who received David so kindly, it is not surprising that when he was subsequently succeeded by his son Hanun, David should have been anxious to show his gratitude in a practical manner (x. 2; see below, p. 793, n. 2).

In addition to this, the birth of Solomon is now brought immediately before the revolt of Adonijah, an appropriate position considering the details of the intrigues in 1 Kings i-ii, and the reference to the king's promise to Bathsheba (i. 13, 17, 30), which may have been made shortly before. It is possible that the story of Bathsheba was originally independent of the Ammonite war, and after it had been brought into its present content the two chapters (x-xii) may have been placed earlier for one of two reasons. Thus, it is possible that when v-viii was introduced, it was desired to place the Ammonite war nearer to the other wars in ch. viii; or again it is possible that pragmatism motives have been at work. The latter seems the preferable view.

With Bathsheba and the birth of Solomon a new element of discord was introduced into the inevitable jealousies of the harem, and if she were indeed a granddaughter of the wily Ahithophel she may have been an adept at schemes and intrigues. At all events, we may couple Adonijah's revolt with the appearance of Bathsheba; a clearer motive for his action could not be expected. But if tradition knew of the earlier revolt of another son, might it not have concluded that this too originated after the birth of Solomon? Tradition knew, too, of the stain which besmirched the king's honour, and if David's success were due to his piety, his misfortunes must have been due to his sins. Sin and the punishment for sin act

and react upon one another in life and in tradition. The revolt of a dearly loved son might be viewed as a punishment for David's adultery, and the death of Absalom would purge the king's guilt and prepare the way for Solomon¹. Certainly Adonijah's revolt, in spite of its far-reaching consequences, did not fasten itself upon the people's imagination as did that of Absalom, but yet where could we find a more important dissension among the military authorities and the priestly representatives? A closer study of 1 Kings i-ii appears to show that its obvious close connexion with the preceding chapters is not original; it is rather the work of an editor than of an early writer (pp. 172-4). If it is the aim of 1 Kings ii to remove from Solomon's shoulders the bloodshed incurred when he established his throne, every care has been taken to bring 2 Sam. xv-xx into close touch with it. Among other obscure details, perhaps the most striking are the passages relating to Joab. The treacherous murder of Abner and Amasa led to his fall (ii. 5), but the context deals entirely with Absalom's revolt (vv. 5-9), and the two crimes were apparently separated by many years. The episodes have a certain resemblance to each other (p. 168), and, although the story of Amasa is at present obscure, there is no doubt that according to Oriental custom Joab acted rightly in avenging the death of Asahel. H. P. Smith observes that "by tribal morality David as kinsman of Asahel was bound to take blood-revenge as much as Joab himself," and in spite of David's denunciation the death of Abner undoubtedly facilitated his move to the throne. Joab's expostulation (2 Sam. iii. 24 sq.) is in perfect harmony with his sturdy uncompromising character as exemplified in xix. 5-7. The latter passage has been taken as an indication that the general had the "old" king in his power, or it is assumed that his influence was increased after the episode of Uriah the Hittite. But there is nothing to show that David was afraid of Joab; the fact that he is said to have replaced him by Amasa points to the contrary. And if we choose to assume that Joab was degraded because he had killed Absalom (xviii. 14), it is remarkable that no allusion is made to this in David's charges to Solomon. Hence I was tempted to conjecture that during the (alleged) redaction steps were taken to give effect to a feeling of bitter hostility towards the sons of Zeruiah.

Animosity towards Joab, an emphatic representation of David's

¹ So, not only could Absalom's death be regarded as a penalty for David's crime, but efforts could be made to remove the stain upon Solomon's birth (p. 156 sq.), and finally the steps by which Solomon came to the throne might be viewed not, as taken upon the king's responsibility alone, but as directly due to David's last charges.

good will to the house of Saul, and the desire to throw back as early as possible the date of his accession to the kingship over all Israel, appear to have been the leading motives, and as a general result of my criticisms I ventured to draw two main conclusions (p. 177): (1) the union of Judah and Israel under one king did not occur at an early date in David's reign; and (2) those narratives which reflect a close relationship between Judah and Israel (or Benjamin) previous to this union do not go back to the oldest account of David's life, but are more probably due to an Ephraimite source. These passages tend to combine the histories of David and the house of Saul, and emphasize the king's consistent generosity towards the unfortunate dynasty (based partly upon a friendship which was said to subsist between David and Jonathan). They also betray here and there a marked bitterness towards Joab. Further, subsequent history shows how loose was the bond uniting north and south; and the ease with which they separated after a few years of joint rule under David and Solomon favours the view that Judah previous to this union had *never* stood in any close relationship to Israel (or Benjamin).

The bearing of these conclusions upon David's history in 1 Samuel was briefly indicated at the close of the article, and it was pointed out that according to the investigations of Budde it was significant that the source of his life at Saul's court was almost wholly Ephraimite; in his life as an outlaw the Judæan narrative predominates, and in his fortunes as an independent chieftain (xxvii, xxix sq.), the sources are wholly Judæan. We can, in fact, distinguish three separate phases: (1) David, the son of Jesse of Bethlehem, a familiar figure at the court of Saul, son-in-law of the king, and the favourite of the people. (2) David, the outlaw, with a few hundred men, never free from danger, and continually hunted by the relentless Saul. To this we must add the important fact that he has the sole survivor of the priestly family on his side. (3) Finally, we have the David who goes to Ziklag with his two wives and his men, "every man with his household." Here he establishes a footing in the country, and by politic gifts to the sheikhs south of Hebron took the first step which led to Jerusalem. It is to be observed that these three situations appear to take David further and further south, and sever ever more irretrievably his early association with Israel. Arguing from (1), we should have expected David to become king over Israel at an earlier period than the tradition itself supposes¹. We hear no more

¹ The Chronicler in this respect is more consistent in his view that men of all the tribes of Israel fell away from Saul and came to David at Ziklag (1 Chron. xii).

of his parents—a redactor has taken the precaution to send them to Moab, the country against which David waged war some—how many?—years later. If we can easily bridge over the gulf which separates (3) from David at Hebron, the narratives scarcely allow us to fill the gaps between (1) and (2), (2) and (3) in a satisfactory manner. H. P. Smith suggests that 1 Sam. xxv “may have followed immediately upon xix. 18–24 in a life of Samuel”; the former chapter is of a distinctive character compared with its surroundings, but the gulf between the two can scarcely be bridged over. Again, since xxvi and xxiv are duplicates, and xxiii. 19–29 (David among the Ziphites) is to be connected with xxiv, whilst xxiii. 15–18 is “a distinct insertion,” it follows that xxvii. 1 is to be joined to xxiii. 14. The latter verse reads like a summing up of the history, so far as relates to this part of David’s life, and the constant danger of his position is the prelude to the desperate step he took in throwing himself upon the mercy of the Philistines (xxvii. 1). These indications suffice to show the scantiness of the several traditions. But many of the incidents are extremely obscure. If David delivered Keilah from the Philistines, and the place was not in Judah, by whom was it occupied? and is it natural that he should willingly incur the anger of the Philistines by this hostile deed? Is it not strange, also, that the five Philistine princes marched north to Shunem and Jezreel to fight Saul whose home was in Gibeah of Benjamin, and that David’s presence is not noticed until they reached their destination?

The site of Ziklag is unfortunately unknown, although if it was given to David by Achish, king of Gath, it was presumably near Gath. But this does not agree with Josh. xv. 31, xix. 5, and a more southerly site is required¹. If xxvii. 8, 10 means anything at all, it must signify that David’s raid against Geshurites, Girzites (?), and Amalekites would not have commended itself to Achish, whilst a raid against the steppes of Judah, of the Jerahmeelites, and of the Kenites would lead Achish to believe that David “had broken finally with Israel and would be his perpetual vassal” (H. P. Smith). In other words, the latter are Israelite, the former conceivably Philistine. Nor is it easy to see the relation these bear to the geographical indications in xxx. 14, where the Amalekites retaliate by ravaging not merely Ziklag, but also the steppes of the Cherethites and of the Calebites. And finally, when David sent of the spoil to the

¹ This outlandish name may be for *Halusa* (Cheyne), but if we may infer that it must have been to the south of Hebron, one is tempted to conjecture that זקלג is a corruption of Isaac (יִצְחָק) or Isaac-el (יִצְחָק־אֵל), on the analogy of Joseph-el and Jacob-el.

cities of the Jerahmeelites, the Kenites, and other cities extending to Hebron, are we to infer that these were the districts despoiled by "the enemies of Yahweh" (xxx. 26; cp. Exod. xvii. 16), or did he use the recaptured booty to win the hearts of other clans by tactful gifts? It is easy to say that all these are the heterogeneous elements of which the (later) tribe of Judah was composed, but is that very satisfactory?

The question of the "Philistines" will come up for consideration in a subsequent section. For the present, it is enough to observe that, although we hear much of the Philistines in North Judah and Benjamin, we have no old traditions regarding the expulsion or subjugation of the Canaanites from that district (2 Sam. v. 6-9 excepted). As for Achish, one may wonder whether the superscription to Psalm xxxiv with its mention of Abimelech is a mere error. Abimelech was "king of the Philistines at Gerar" (Gen. xxvi), and David's visit to Achish of Gath is curiously reminiscent of Isaac's visit to Abimelech at Gerar and the covenant between them¹. We may at all events feel sure that if tradition associated David's youth with the south of Judah, and actually sent him to the wilderness of Paran², there must have been some definite object in view. Paran is practically the district around Kadesh; it is associated with the Levites; Bethlehem (the traditional home of David) appears on two noteworthy occasions closely connected with Levites (Judges xvii. 7; xix. 1); the chronicler has associated with David's life the inauguration of Levitical and priestly classes—are these three facts independent of each other, or can any connecting link be found?

I shall now proceed to notice the objections that have been raised against my theory of the composition of 2 Samuel by Professor Budde and private correspondents; they are based partly upon literary, and partly upon historical grounds, and I shall endeavour to summarize them as fairly as possible. My attempt to find in 2 Samuel Judaeen and Ephraimite narratives as in 1 Samuel may be willingly given up as a general principle, and, were I presenting the theory anew in full, I would feel more attracted by such a literary scheme as H. P. Smith has adopted in his commentary³.

¹ I notice that Winckler (*Gesch. Israels*, II, 183) has felt the same difficulty as regards Achish, king of Gath, and suggests that he has taken the place of a king of Muṣri, that is of a district further to the south of Palestine.

² xxv. 1, LXX, has Maon, clearly the easier reading (cp. xxv. 2 sqq.), but how are we to account for the text? The more obvious reading is not necessarily original.

³ Budde's own labours on Judges and Samuel have perhaps prejudiced him. To argue that *x* in A is not a sign of an Ephraimite source because

(1) In the first place, it has been pointed out by several that "it is incredible to believe that David's history should have been so obscured or glossed during the comparatively short interval between David and the date of the Judæan narrative (middle of eighth century)." To this it is to be observed that it is not to the earliest narrator, but to a later redactor, that the present arrangement is due. No one will suppose that the famine and pestilence in 2 Sam. xxi and xxiv fell between Sheba's revolt and that of Adonijah, and even as it is allowed that later theory has obscured the lives of Samuel and Saul, so, later theory, too, according to my argument, must be held responsible for the position of Absalom's revolt.

(2) Again, it is said that the chronological difficulties involved are too serious, and if (as was argued) the Geshur to which Absalom fled was in South Palestine (cp. Josh. xiii. 2), they are only increased; David (it is objected) could not have become the son-in-law of the king of Geshur until he had himself become king, therefore not before he was anointed at Hebron; Absalom was not the firstborn, and we must allow time for David to strengthen his position before he could make such an alliance; Absalom could not have been very young when he revolted, and hence it follows we must allow anywhere between twenty and thirty years for David's reign in Hebron; this leaves no time for his deeds as king over Israel, indeed he would be too old to conduct campaigns against Ammon, Moab, and Edom, and it is strange that the history of the north is blank all these years; finally, at the time of the revolt of Absalom David was an old man, too old to go out to war.

In connexion with these objections, as regards the "king" of Geshur who (as a support to the theory of the Judæan revolt under Absalom) I took to be a south Palestinian and not a Syrian chief¹, Budde holds that since Geshur is omitted from the list of Syrian allies of Ammon (2 Sam. x. 6), there is reason to infer that David had married one of its princesses, and he remarks that it must first be made probable that a necessarily small tribe of the southern steppes had a "king." As for David, he observes, it was of no small importance for him to ally himself with a "real king," and this would not have been for him a difficult task.

it occurs elsewhere in B, C, and D which are Judæan, is not convincing if B, C, and D are in their turn also Ephraimite. Occasionally, also, the linguistic criteria (upon which I laid undue weight) may be successfully removed by ingenious emendation. So כְּרִימִים "spies" (a sign of E) in xv. 10 is replaced by מַלְאָכִים "messengers," or the word is "einfach als falsche Ausdeutung zu streichen."

¹ So years ago Stähelin thought of the south Geshur (*Leben David's*, 1866, p. 29).

In reply to this, I must confess that I see no sound reason for the supposition that a "king" of the northern Geshur would be a greater potentate or a more helpful ally than one of the south. It is good policy for a king to strengthen or increase his influence and position by useful alliances, and since David had married Abigail of Caleb, and Ahinoam of Jezreel, and had sent round presents to the sheikhs of the country south of Hebron, it seemed not improbable that David had also married into the south Geshur. "King" of course must not be pressed too far. There was a king of Arad (Num. xxi. 1), seventy kings fed under Adoni-bezek's table (Judges i. 7), and they were plentiful in Canaan (Joshua x sq.). One does not regard them as "real kings," their power can be comprehended best by comparing the authority of the Canaanite chiefs in the Amarna Tablets. After all, David's position at Hebron was not a grand one, and a "real king" might hesitate to give his daughter in marriage to one who a few years before had been a roving outlaw.

Next, the chronology. Was Absalom born at Hebron (iii. 2-5)? If the framework of the notice be correct, one must allow that Amnon and Chileab were born at Hebron, although David was already married to Abigail and Ahinoam some time before he went to Ziklag, and there he is said to have lived sixteen months (1 Sam. xxv. 42 sq., xxvii. 7)¹. But the passage is admitted to be an interpolation, and Budde places it before v. 13-16, and this being so, it is only natural that the editor should have brought his list into harmony with the context by means of the opening and closing statement that the sons whose names he quotes were born at Hebron. Moreover, if David only passed seven or eight years at Hebron, how old were these sons when he moved to Jerusalem and made them (and also the sons born at Jerusalem) serve as priests (2 Sam. viii. 18)? Is it necessary to insist that Absalom was born at Hebron?

Clearly we do not know how old Absalom was when he revolted, and if Jehoash and Azariah could reign at the age of seven and sixteen respectively, I do not think the question is one that could be profitably investigated. Certainly, it was eleven years after the murder of Amnon according to the chronology, but it seems extremely probable that the data are not genuine². It seems rather inconsistent

¹ In ch. xxv which leads up to David's marriage with Abigail he is represented as the chief of a band of roving followers, but he goes down to Ziklag with his two wives, and a band of men "every man with his household" (xxvii. 3). Will it be held that there is no gap between the two situations?

² The eleven years is reduced to nine by arbitrarily supposing (with Budde) that the four years of xv. 7 (so LXX) include the two of xiv. 28.

to accept them because they tell against the theory of the early date of the revolt, and to reject the notices in ii. 11 which imply a period of five and a half years between the death of Ishbaal and David's accession to the throne in Jerusalem, and thus incidentally support the argument that from a historical point of view ch. v. 1-3 does *not* follow immediately after iv. On these grounds, it is not necessary to assume that David reigned "twenty to thirty years in Hebron"¹; the narrative of the revolt may give one the impression that Absalom is a young impetuous man, but "impressions" alone can scarcely serve as evidence. At all events it cannot be admitted that David is here represented as an old man and that he would be far too old to wage the wars against Ammon and Moab which I have placed later. For, firstly, is it reasonable to expect one to fix the age at which a king must be supposed to be too old to go to war? Secondly, even after a skirmish with the Philistines David was adjured not to go out to battle again lest the "light of Israel" be quenched (xxi. 16 sq.). Finally, if David is dissuaded from taking part in the battle against Absalom (xviii. 3, see Budde, *ad loc.*) there are other motives at work. David was unwilling to take a hand in fighting with his beloved son, the loss of Absalom meant more to him than the glory of victory; and, if this be not enough, the verse seems to imply that the king could send out reserves if necessary. David left Joab to conduct the war against Abner (ii-iv), but this is not usually taken as an event in his old age. Will it, therefore, be seriously maintained that the energetic king who conducts operations in xv-xix, and who (according to Budde) took his wives with him in his flight to Mahanaim (see p. 796 below), was old and feeble like the David of Adonijah's revolt (1 Kings i)? If, as is usually held, the latter follows upon Absalom's rebellion, is it not at least striking that now (and only now) the narrative takes pains to show that the king had reached a good old age (1 Kings i. 1-3)? No doubt the chronological notices in xiii-xv represent some scheme, and the most probable appears to be that according to which Solomon was twelve years old when he came to the throne (p. 160). But such notices are not rarely suspicious, and if they are to be rejected it is perhaps enough if one can lay the finger upon their probable origin.

(3) Again, as regards the proposal to place the Ammonite war *after* the revolt, certain counter-arguments have been put forward. Budde (*Sam.* 246 sq.), for example, deems it more probable that the

¹ Nor need the blank in the history of the northern tribes from the death of Ishbaal to the time of David's supremacy over all Israel, prove a stumblingblock. Are there no blanks in the history of Israel?

first relations between David and Ammon were warlike, and that later they became on a more friendly footing; if Nahash king of Ammon died in the early part of David's reign, his son Hanun might very well have been old enough to ascend the throne a few years later; naturally David cultivated friendly relations with one who would be Ishbaal's foe, and the reference in x. 2 has no deeper meaning; but now that David had no longer a rival, but held the sovereignty, the Ammonites would regard him as an enemy, and his treatment of Moab and Edom would make them suspicious. All this (according to Budde) speaks for the early part of David's reign. Subsequently, it is observed, when Ammon was no longer a separate state, we actually find that Shobi, the brother of the vanquished Hanun, is not called "king," clearly because he is only David's governor. The refutation thus appears complete in every detail.

In reply to these objections, one must confess that they are to an extent as hypothetical as the reconstructions I suggested, and the question must turn rather upon the degree of probability. Nahash was king of Ammon (1 Sam. xi) before David appears upon the scene, and it has been argued that he must have been dead however early the revolt occurred. This is scarcely a question of the age to which kings live, and it seems much more remarkable that Achish, the king of David's early youth, should have lived to a few years after his protégé's death (1 Kings ii. 39)¹! Again (in the absence of evidence) it is surely a matter of opinion whether warlike relations precede friendly, or vice versa, and whether x. 2 has some subtle allusion or is merely diplomatic etiquette².

It is of course not unlikely that the Ammonites would resent David's increased power, and the same has been said of the Philistines, who (it is supposed) allowed David to war with Ishbaal, and only intervened when he had conquered and become king over the whole land³. But would not Edom and Moab also rise in arms? Surely if

¹ The follower of the tradition will observe that Saul reigned only two years (1 Sam. xiii. 1), but the tradition is not reliable.

² The critics are at variance: H. P. Smith supposes that Nahash had helped David in his early struggles. Budde now says "es handelt sich um feststehende Gebräuche." Winckler in 1895 (*Gesch. Israels*, I, 213) was convinced that the reference was only to neighbourliness. In 1900 he seems to have changed his views (II, 181). Cheyne (*Encyc. Bib.*, col. 3258) notes that "The statement that he (Nahash) had 'shown kindness' to David has been much discussed. The 'kindness' cannot have been passed over in the records, and yet where does the traditional text mention it?" So much depends upon whether one is supporting or contesting existing theories.

³ On pp. 150, 152, 154 it is argued that the fights with the Philistines

the traditional view is to be followed, it is only right that some attempt be made to sketch a plausible sequence of events. One knows that the great wars are summarized in 2 Sam. viii. The chapter ends with a passage "which evidently marks the conclusion of a section of the narrative" (H. P. Smith). The "impression" gained is that v-viii owe their position here to an editor¹ who has collected much miscellaneous matter, similar as regards contents to that which is found in xxi-xxiv. There, they are admittedly out of chronological order, and it is scarcely less doubtful that the incidents in v-viii are not to be viewed as consecutive. Their position suggests an early part of David's reign. The "impression" left by ch. viii is that we have a concluding panegyric, probably of different periods. These successful wars against the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, Edomites (and ver. 12 adds the Amalekites!) were obviously not waged at one time, simply because each viewed David's step with jealousy and hostility. If David adopted a natural policy his defeated foes in one war would be his mercenaries or allies in the next; to assume that they rose against him each in turn would be unreasonable.

To wage these wars, large armies of seasoned troops were required, whereas David fled from before Absalom with a mere bodyguard consisting perhaps of foreigners (xv. 18). It would not be unnatural to suppose that (adopting the current view) the northern tribes submitted to David's yoke in order to fight a common enemy, and only revolted when the land was at peace, but it has yet to be proved that they actually did revolt (see below, p. 798). And if we assume that they did join with Judah, it is strange that although they disappear from the narrative in a state of half-suppressed hostility (xx. 2), Joab leads the bodyguard—and not an army—through their territory as though nothing had happened. Moreover, David's wars had raised Israel to the position of the greatest of the western states, whereas the whole tenor of the early stages of the revolt unmistakably emphasizes his desperate position. Resistance was out of the question until he had collected a few warriors to his side². But where—following the traditional view—were the decimated Ammonites, the despoiled Moabites, the subjugated Philistines, and that inveterate foe, the Edomites? They neither attempted to regain

in v, xxi, xxiii were to be placed at an early date before David became king of Israel.

¹ Or editors, the introductory notice being twofold (v. 3 and v. 1, 2; p. 154).

² 4,000 according to Josephus (*Ant.*, vii. 101), and the moderate estimate (contrast e. g. 1 Sam. xi. 8) invites confidence.

their independence nor did they join cause with Absalom. This was no sudden rising; widespread preparations had been made beforehand, and yet at the critical time the hostile peoples are quiet.

As an incidental part of the reconstruction, the theory proposed "ganz aus der Welt zu schaffen" the unfortunate Shobi to join the unlucky Vashni in the tents of Minnith and Pannag¹. To infer from the absence of such a title as "king of Ammon" that the land was no longer independent is hardly justifiable; the passage mentions homes not official designations (xvii. 27). Even Hanun himself is not called "king" of Ammon², and the war in x-xii is not with Hanun the king but with the Ammonites. One does not infer that when "Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David" (v. 11) that the latter had not yet become king; allowance must be made for the narrator's style and fancy (contrast viii. 6 and 10).

It has also been objected that xvii. 27 presupposes ix, and Meribbaal could not have been taken from the care of Machir of Lo-debar until David had settled in Jerusalem, and had become king of Israel, *ergo* Absalom's revolt must be placed later in David's reign. This brings us to a difficulty in the narrative which has to be faced, whether the new theory or the traditional view be accepted. No doubt Machir's friendliness to David at Mahanaim was intended to be viewed as a grateful return for the king's kindness to Meribbaal (ix), even as the troubles which befell the king were regarded as a fitting retribution for his fall in the matter of Bathsheba and his treatment of the sons of Saul (xxi). But as analogy shows, it is not the original writer but the later reader who loves to associate cause and effect and point a moral to the tale, and, further, the "impression of literary unity," in other words, the intimate connexion of the narratives one with the other, is due to editorial skill. One learns from experience that cross-references and the like are the work of the editors, not of the contributors! Contrast for example the simple straightforward passages in 1 Sam. ix. 1-14, 15-x. 1 with the cross-references x. 5-8. The fact that Saul's rejection at Gilgal (1 Sam. xiii. 8-15) points back to x. 8 does not make it genuine, and if the account of his anointing (x. 17-27) is connected with chaps. viii, xii, and xv, it is not assumed that viii-xv inclusive are therefore by one hand. The indications of redaction in the court history are certainly less superficial than in 1 Samuel, but a careful study of the book seems to prove their presence. To notice one insignificant example: when we find that the reference in Nathan's speech to Absalom's conduct (xii. 11) is

¹ See the *Encyc. Bib.* on these names.

² But "lord" (לֹדִין), x. 3.

regarded as a gloss, I must maintain my former suggestion (p. 162) that the act in question (xvi. 22, cp. xv. 16, xx. 3) is alike intrusive. The passages fit in loosely, and have all the appearance of being interpolated. Budde, if I understand aright, concludes from the specific reference to David's concubines that David in his hurried flight took his wives with him. Thus we are to suppose that the "aged" king, supported only by a mere bodyguard, flees in haste from the capital, but takes the precaution to remove his wives¹. Or, may we not rather believe that the story of the revolt as it passed from mouth to mouth was made the vehicle for inculcating a lesson? We know what Absalom's act meant to the Oriental mind, it was simply a step which the successful usurper took as a matter of right; and it seems far more probable that when the narratives were made an object lesson, popular tradition should have made David suffer in a characteristic manner in return for his treacherous conduct towards Uriah the Hittite.

Tradition, possibly an Ephraimite one, but in all probability of comparatively late origin, saw in David's extremity a fitting punishment for the blood of the house of Saul (xvi. 6-8; cp. xxi). The instrument is one Shimei, a Benjamite, and the part which this tribe plays in the revolt is not free from obscurity. Shimei himself could muster a thousand tribesmen (xix. 17), no inconsiderable gathering considering the period. Meribbaal, too, appears to have hoped to seize the opportunity to build up the fortunes of Saul's house, and if he explains his behaviour with a very intelligible excuse (xix. 24-30), he is nevertheless condemned to lose half his estate. But there is no concerted action; they are merely independent lay figures; and whilst Shimei's outspoken language represents what some thought of David's dealings with the Gibeonites, Meribbaal's humble attitude is an acknowledgment of the king's favour to the son of an old friend. The emphatic manner in which certain narratives insist upon David's good will towards the house of Saul may reflect the sentiments of conquered tribes anxious to point to an early covenant bond between conquered and conquerors, but the attitude of David in xxi is so entirely distinct and archaic from a religious point of view that it must strike one as representing an older tradition. Budde, still maintaining his original reconstruction, places xxi. 1-14 before ix, and finds in the words of Shimei (xvi. 7 sq.) and the appearance of Meribbaal (xvi. 1-4, xix. 24-30) support for his view. Whatever we

¹ It would be equally justifiable and rash to assume that Bathsheba and Solomon accompanied the king, and with more justice, inasmuch as Absalom (it might be argued) would be only too glad to put the young child out of the way!

may think of David's covenant with Jonathan, there is no difficulty in assuming that David's inquiry¹ should follow as soon as possible after the death of Ishbaal (iv). If xxi intervenes, we must allow an interval of at least three years (ver. 1), which makes David's kindness somewhat belated². Here, the Gibeonites have demanded and received seven of Saul's descendants, and have executed their vengeance upon them. We may treat ver. 7 as a gloss or not, but it is at least plausible to imagine that if seven sons could be found, the whereabouts of Jonathan's son could hardly be quite unknown. The sequel, with the pathetic picture of Rizpah, is well known, but it is not until this juncture that David thinks of interring the remains of all the survivors in the sepulchre of Kish, the father of Saul. Nor does it seem quite appropriate, to our ideas at least, that after seven sons had thus met their fate, David should inquire whether any more were left³. May one not believe that when xxi. 1-14 found a place in 2 Samuel, Shimei was assigned his present somewhat unnatural rôle (p. 170 sq.), and that when the story of Meribbaal formed part of the present narratives, he too had to find a place in the revolt (p. 169 sq.)?

Again, is it "only natural" that David fled to Mahanaim (so Budde), or is it not rather remarkable? If, following the tradition, Israel was up in arms against the king, why should he take refuge in Ishbaal's capital? And if, following the theory, he was not yet king, why flee to Mahanaim? Could he hope for succour here? Had it been Ammon, we could understand his motive. But supposing this belongs to an early date, before war broke out with Ishbaal, might this not be a good reason for his generous sentiments towards Saul's descendants? The problem would be simplified if it could be agreed whether Israel did or did not take part in the revolt. Judah alone is prominent throughout; the men of Israel (like Aaron in the older narratives) appear only to disappear. If one considers the preparations for the revolt, how Absalom sowed disaffection among men of the tribes of Israel (xv. 2-6), and after four years' delay (so LXX) sent round messengers to rouse Israel to action, it is scarcely conceivable that this is the true account of the commencement⁴. Although

¹ "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake" (ix. 1).

² No doubt the three years in ver. 1 may be easily rejected henceforth, but will this remove the difficulty?

³ If Meribbaal lived at David's court knowing full well the fate of his relatives, is not his grateful acknowledgment in xix. 28 a little forced?

⁴ It was suggested that ver. 7 contains the oldest account of the commencement of the revolt. On its possible object, see p. 160 sq.

the hostility of the tribes is patent (ver. 13), and they come to Jerusalem with Absalom (xvi. 15), yet Hushai counsels the young prince to gather the people from "Dan to Beersheba," and to this advice "all the men of Israel" agreed (xvii. 11-14). After the battle it is the men of Judah who have to be reconciled, for "Israel" had fled to their tents (xix. 8), and when Judah came to Gilgal to escort the king, only "half the people of Israel" were present (xix. 40). Even at this moment there was hostility between Judah and Israel, and when Sheba the Benjamite seized the occasion to raise a fresh revolt, "all the men of Israel went up from following David and followed Sheba" (xx. 2). But they are heard of no more. Sheba's followers are his clansmen only, as small a gathering as that of Shimei, and there is nothing to show (as far as the present narratives are concerned) whether the ill-feeling had died down by the time we reach 1 Kings i. Hence not only was it held that the size of the revolt had been exaggerated, but the present position of Sheba's revolt was merely due to redaction (p. 166 sq.). "It would have been madness," as H. P. Smith admits¹, "to revolt after the suppression of Absalom," and, apart from the question of probability, the present literary form of the passage points to the work of an editor. To this Budde dissents. The suggestion that Sheba's revolt had been appended by a redactor who had in his mind the story of the parting of the two kingdoms (1 Kings xii. 16-20) is rejected; the reverse, according to Budde, is more probable. But it is not surprising that popular tradition should have brought together revolts of different periods and by different tribes, and if it will be admitted that Sheba's rising represents an attempt of Benjamin to contest the authority of David the situation becomes more clear. David's army has sunk down to the bodyguard again (xx. 7), and Budde's objection that David's men would scarcely pursue Sheba and his clan through the length of North Israel applies equally to the traditional view, which represents Israel as parting from Judah in hostility. Surely it is more remarkable that David should have fled to Mahanaim to escape Judah and Israel, and that Saul and his servant wandered about in search of some lost asses in a country which was groaning under the yoke of the Philistines (1 Sam. ix. 16).

In conclusion, it is not amiss that we should remind ourselves of Robertson Smith's words, nearly thirty years ago, in his article "David" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "The Biblical narratives are not so constructed as to enable us to decide in chronological order the thirty-three years of David's reign over all Israel." They represent a view which is very generally admitted and the questions

¹ *Old Testament History*, p. 149, n. 2 (Edinburgh, 1903).

I have raised imply that we should probably include also the seven years that David was king over Judah at Hebron. Whatever opinion may ultimately be held regarding the sequence of events and the extent of redaction, it is only right that those who take the traditional or even the "moderate" position should endeavour to offer some reasonably consistent scheme. The life of David is the turning-point in early Hebrew history, and on that account the narratives require the closest examination from the historical as well as from the literary side. These involve a discussion of the situation before David's time, the lives of Saul and Samuel, and the stories of the Book of Judges, a consideration of which will be undertaken in the following sections.

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(To be continued.)